Australian Bureau of Statistics

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One in ten workers are independent contractors: ABS

In November 2008, one in ten employed people worked as independent contractors in either their main or second job, according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

There were 967,100 people who worked as independent contractors in their main job, and an additional 134,100 people who worked as independent contractors in their second job. Men were more likely to be independent contractors, with 12% of employed men (727,000) working as independent contractors in their main job, compared with 5% of employed women (240,100).

Over two-fifths (41%) of male independent contractors were employed in the construction industry in their main job, while almost one quarter (23%) of female independent contractors were employed in the professional, scientific and technical services industry. Over a third (36%) of male independent contractors were employed as technicians and trade workers in their main job, while just under a third (32%) of female independent contractors were employed as professionals.

Other findings on independent contractors in their main job include:

- three-quarters (75%) usually worked 40 hours or more per week;
- almost three-quarters (73%) were usually able to work on multiple active contracts;
- under half (46%) had more than one active contract in the reference week; and
- almost two-thirds (65%) were able to sub-contract their own work.

The ABS also found that 576,700 people (or 5% of employed people) found their job through a labour hire firm/employment agency. Of these, 131,400 were paid by that labour hire firm/employment agency. Almost a quarter (22%) of men who found their job through a labour hire firm/employment agency were employed as professionals in their main job, while two-fifths (40%) of women who found their job through a labour hire firm/employment agency were employed as clerical and administrative workers.

Further information can be found in *Forms of Employment, Australia, November 2008* (cat. no. 6359.0).

Media notes:

1. **Independent Contractors are defined as employed people who operate their own business and who contract to perform services for others under a commercial**

contract, rather than as an employee under an employment contract. Independent Contractors provide a labour service directly to a client, rather than generating their income from managing their staff or from selling goods or services.

2. **When using our statistics, please attribute the Australian Bureau of Statistics (or the ABS) as the source**
3.

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